

# Learning to Hunt

Hosting a hunting-  
based outdoor skills  
event in your  
community



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# Bull's-eye!

## Shooting at still targets

Participants get hands-on experience shooting .22 caliber rifles at still targets.



# Station 13

Bull's-eye!

## Learning to Hunt

### Objectives

#### Participants shall:

demonstrate ability to handle a .22 caliber rifle.

show proficiency at hitting still targets.

demonstrate ability to hit targets from a standing, sitting, benchrest, kneeling and prone position.

### Equipment

5 .22 caliber bolt-action rifles  
5 to 25 rounds of ammunition per participant

5 paper targets per participant  
Plastic one-gallon milk jug filled with water dyed with red food coloring, or a large melon

Old bar stool or other prop or placing the milk jug or melon.

5 sets of ear protection  
5 sets of eye protection  
1 volunteer Hunter Education Instructor for each shooting station

**10 Commandments of Shooting Safety** Poster found on page 164.

### Station Setup

For this activity, you will need to have a team of instructors. You will need a "Range Master" to coordinate the shooting schedule. For ultimate safety, arrange to have one volunteer Hunter Education Instructor positioned at each shooting station to coach participants with loading, firing and unloading of the firearms.

Arrange to use a local public or private target range. If one is not available, then you will need to select an area that has an appropriate and safe backstop such as a dirt bank. Block off all entries into the shooting range. For safety purposes, ask for the assistance of your local DNR conservation warden when setting up a new shooting range.

Prepare your target range with targets set at appropriate distances for the age group involved (suggested range is 50 feet to 50 yards). Set up five different benches or other shooting stations with one rifle at each station. Have ear and eye protection at each station. Down range, set up a melon or a plastic one-gallon milk jug filled with red-colored water on a old barstool.

*When setting up a target shooting range, follow important rules for range safety.*



## Procedure

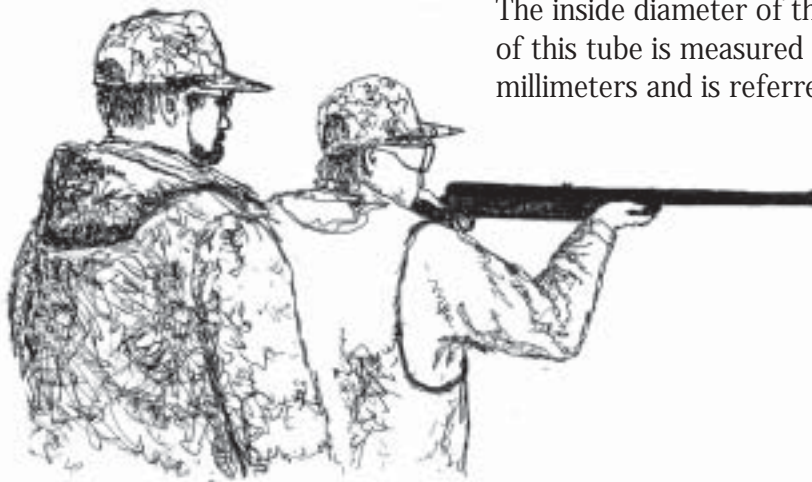
Welcome participants to your station. Tell them they will be learning to shoot a .22 caliber bolt action rifle at this station. They will be shooting at still targets. Explain that in some forms of hunting, such as squirrel hunting, deer hunting, or turkey hunting, hunters usually prefer to shoot at a still animal. They will learn some of these skills at this field station.

Show them the rifles they will be using. Hold up one of the rifles and ask participants to help you name the different parts of the rifle.

Ask them to point out:

<b>Stock</b>	<b>Barrel</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Butt Plate</b>
<b>Grip</b>	<b>Comb</b>
<b>Rear sight</b>	<b>Front sight</b>
<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Trigger guard</b>
<b>Safety</b>	<b>Bolt</b>
<b>Bolt handle</b>	<b>Magazine</b>
<b>Muzzle</b>	

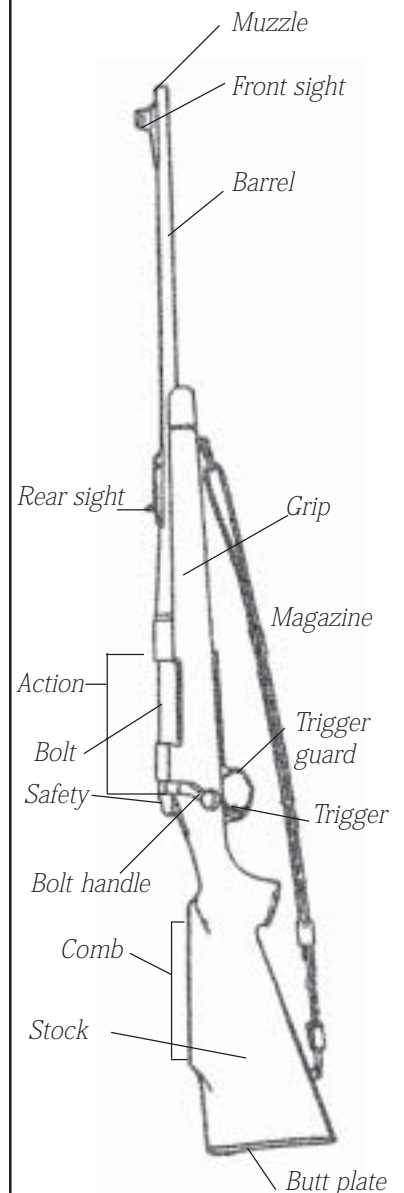
Ask your participants if they know what the term “.22 caliber” means in reference to their gun? Explain that when the gun barrel is made, a long, narrow piece of metal is bored out forming a tube. The bullet passes through this tube. The inside diameter of the opening of this tube is measured in millimeters and is referred to as



*Hunter Education Instructors must be paired with students on a 1:1 ratio to provide the safest and most effective instruction.*

the caliber of the rifle. If you have demonstration rifles of different calibers available, show the students (without pointing the barrel at them!) the differences in the sizes of the openings of the barrel.

## Activity



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*Make sure that students wear appropriate eye and ear protection.*

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Now ask them if they know how a rifle is different from a shotgun. If no answer, explain that the inside bore of the rifle barrel has spiral grooves cut into it. The bore of a shotgun is smooth. Rifles shoot cartridges with bullets as their projectiles. Shotguns shoot shells filled with tiny projectiles of steel or lead pellets that spray out in a cone-shaped pattern. The grooves in a rifle cause the bullet to spin as it exits the barrel. This spinning makes the bullet travel in a straighter line.

Ask participants how far a bullet will travel compared to the pellets in a shotshell. A .22 bullet can range anywhere from a half a mile to a mile and a half. Some bullets in some rifles, such as a 7 MM Magnum can travel three and a half miles!!! On the other hand, a shot in a shotgun shell travels from four to 10 football fields...or from 1000 ft to 2500 feet.

Before participants shoot, have them do the test to determine which eye is their dominant eye. This activity is also described in **Station #6 Come to Your Senses**, page 64.

Before beginning the shooting experience, explain that a skilled hunter must have good vision and hearing in order to spot game and detect sounds of approaching hunters or vehicles. Hunters, therefore, need to use adequate



protection to avoid injuring their eyesight and hearing.

Demonstrate the proper use of ear protection. Explain that the noise on a target range may be deafening. Beware of the first sign of hearing stress—ringing in the ears. Protect against this by wearing hearing protection at all times on a firing range even if shooting alone or not shooting at all. Ear protection not only prevents hearing damage, but also makes it easier for you to concentrate while shooting. While you can choose from a variety of different styles of ear protection, some types are better than others are. Foam earplugs are inexpensive and may reduce the noise by as much as 30 decibels, if inserted tightly enough to seal out sound. For maximum hearing protection, use insulated earmuffs with hard outer shells. These are the kinds of ear protection worn by heavy equipment operators and construction workers.

Now explain that hunters should always wear shooting glasses while hunting. They protect your eyes

from debris as well as from brush. Make sure the shooting glasses you choose have high-impact lenses. Yellow glasses may be unsafe to wear while hunting, since the yellow makes some shades of color look white, like the tail of a deer. Choose smoke, green, or brown tints for hunting. Keep your eyes moving across your field of vision. This reduces eye fatigue and helps you to see objects at the sides, as well as directly in your line of sight.

Review with the entire group the **Ten Commandments of Shooting Safety** found on the next page. Emphasize the first three commandments and have the students repeat these three safety rules. Tell them that the first commandment is the Golden Rule. By always pointing their gun's muzzle in a safe direction, they will avoid shooting something (or someone) they do not wish to shoot.

Remind participants that just knowing these rules is of little value unless they have the attitude to use them all of the time. Being safe means that a person must consciously keep his or her gun under control ALL OF THE TIME. Always remain alert when in the possession of a firearm.

Explain that only the ammunition designed for a particular gun can be fired safely in that gun. Point out how the barrel of most guns

has the ammunition type stamped on the barrel. The ammunition can be identified by information printed on an unopened box. It is also sometimes stamped on the cartridge or shotshell itself. Never shoot a gun if you have any question about the compatibility of the gun and ammunition.

Now demonstrate the use of the .22 rifle yourself. First show proper safety procedures such as wearing appropriate ear and eye protection. Then demonstrate the following:

Make sure the gun's safety is in the "on" position.

Load a .22 cartridge into the bolt action of the rifle and close the bolt action.

Aim at the target using the sights on the gun. Explain that aiming is a two step process. First, you must be sure to properly align the gun's front sight with the gun's rear sight. With open sights that have a post or bead front sight, proper alignment is attained when the front sight is centered in the rear sight notch and the top of the front sight is level with the top of the rear sight. Then, in order to hit the "bull's-eye," you must place the aligned sights onto the center of the target to get the appropriate "sight picture." Learn to concentrate totally

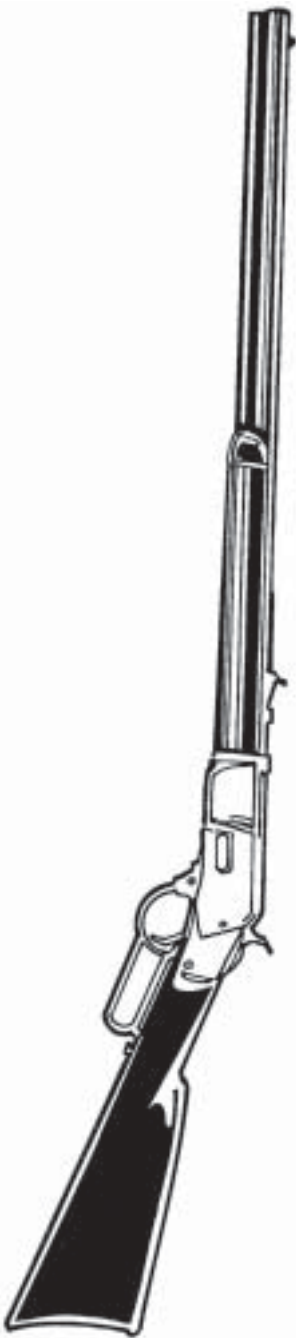
# Station 13

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## Ten Commandments of Shooting Safety

1. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
2. Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
3. Be sure of your target and what lay beyond before pulling the trigger.
4. Unload your firearm when you are not using it.
5. Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
6. Be sure the barrel and action are clear and that you are using the proper ammunition for your firearm.
7. Never climb a tree or a fence, or jump a ditch, with a loaded firearm.
8. Never shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
9. Store firearms and ammunition separately under locked conditions.
10. Never use alcohol and other drugs before or during shooting.



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and consistently on controlling the sight picture when firing. Keep your dominant eye open and the other eye closed.

Take the safety "off."

Control your breath. Breath control is important. Make sure you stop breathing before you pull the trigger. This will cause your body to cease moving like it does when you breathe normally. Your hands may still shake, but this won't be nearly as bad as when you are breathing. At the point when you are ready to fire, simply exhale normally and stop breathing. Be sure your body is relaxed. Don't hold your breath for more than 6 or 8 seconds.

Squeeze the trigger straight back in one smooth, controlled motion until the rifle fires. During this step continue to concentrate on the sight picture.

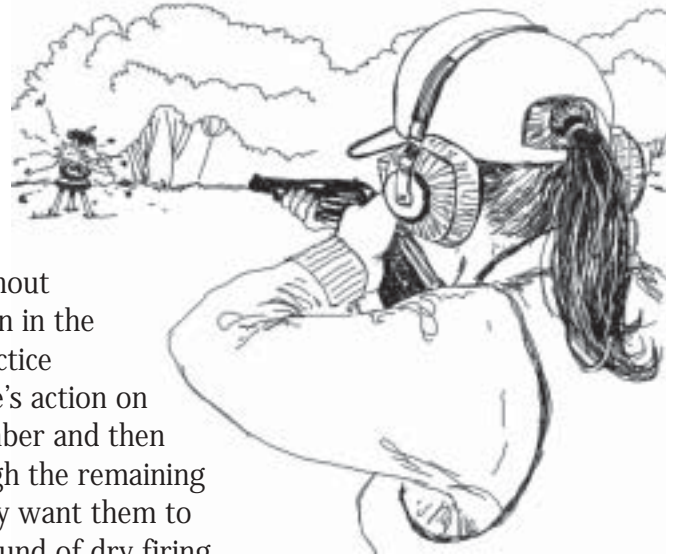
Follow through with your shot by continuing to maintain your breath control, sight picture and trigger control immediately after you shoot. This will reduce the possibility of sudden movement that could throw the bullet off course.

Put the safety back on. Eject the spent cartridge.

Many times, participants feel that a .22 rifle is a small gun without much power...almost like a toy. To demonstrate the incredible destructive power of this "small" rifle, shoot at a melon or at a plastic milk jug filled with red-colored water. The force of the bullet is tremendous. A .22 rifle is not a toy!

For ultimate safety, you should arrange to have one volunteer Hunter Education Instructor positioned at each shooting station to assist participants with loading, aiming, firing and unloading of the firearms. You may want the participants to first practice using the dry firing technique. This means walking them through all the steps above, but without any ammunition in the gun. They practice closing the rifle's action on an empty chamber and then proceed through the remaining steps. You may want them to practice one round of dry firing from each of the five shooting positions before they actually fire their five live rounds.

Now explain to the participants that you or another designated person will assume the role of the Range Officer and will use some "shooting range commands."



*A .22 caliber rifle is not a toy!  
Drive this point home to your  
students by shooting at a  
water-filled milk jug or a large  
watermelon.*

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*Hunter Education Instructors help teach participants the correct and safe way of shooting at targets.*

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These commands must be obeyed at all times. Caution the participants that if the Range Officer believes that one of them is not listening or is goofing off, the Range Officer will remove that person from his or her shooting station.

The Range Officer will first ask "All Ready?" If someone is NOT ready to shoot, then that person should shout out: "No!" If everyone appears ready, the Range Officer will shout the command: "Commence Firing!" After everyone has fired the Range Officer will shout: "Cease Fire!" To remind everyone to put the gun safety back to the "on" position, the Range Officer will shout: "Safety On!"

For the second round, the Range Officer will shout. "Reload" and then proceed in order:

"All Ready?"  
"Commence Firing!"  
"Cease Fire!"  
"Safety On!"  
"Reload"

The Range Officer will continue this series of commands until the participants have shot all five rounds.

Allow each participant to shoot five rounds of cartridges from the standing, sitting, benchrest, kneeling and prone positions.

Have all participants shoot their five rounds from the standing position. After everyone has had a chance to shoot, then cycle them through the sitting position and so on. This will reduce the amount of time the other participants have to wait until their turn and it will also provide some rest time between each set of rounds.

After five rounds have been shot, the Range Officer will shout: "Cease Fire! Eject! Safety On! Guns Down!" Participants should safely place their unloaded gun down on the table or in the case provided. After everyone's gun is safe and down, then Range Officer will shout: "Check Targets!"

The five participants will walk down to the end of the shooting range and check their targets. The Range Officer and other instructors can provide advice to the shooters about improving their next series of shots. Explain that for the first five rounds it is important to try to get the five shots grouped as closely together as possible, even if the group is not dead center on target. Your rifles should already have had their sights adjusted, but explain to the participants the process you would need to take, if a gun appeared to have a sight that was not appropriately adjusted. Take down the spent targets and replace them with a fresh paper target.

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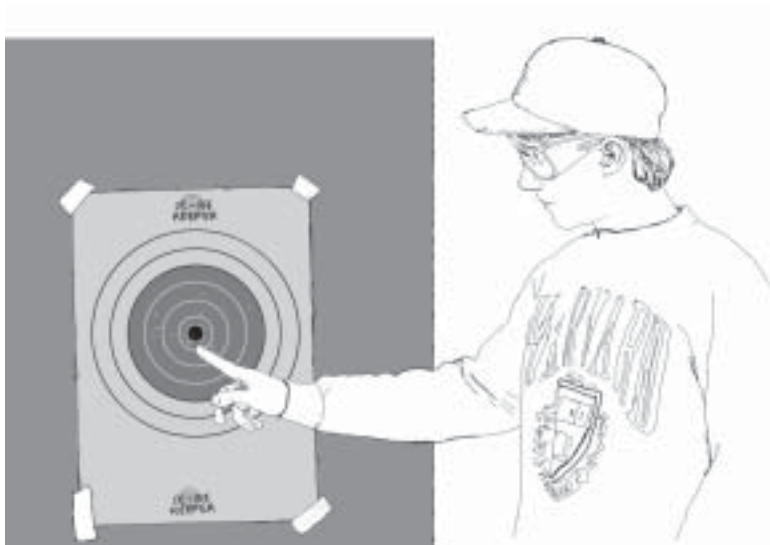
Bull's-eye!

Continue changing participants at the shooting stations until everyone has had a chance to shoot five rounds of ammunition in each of the shooting positions.

Ask each new set of participants at the shooting range to recite the first three commandments of shooting safety before they begin to shoot.

At the end of the session, tell participants that if they want to continue to explore the world of shooting sports they could join a local rod and gun club with a shooting range. Many counties have private ranges open to the public. Provide your participants with the name and number of some local clubs. If your

participants are youths, you may want to tell them about the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Many counties have this program available to their youths. Check with your County's 4-H Youth Development Agent.



*Students are enthusiastic about success. Give them plenty of positive feedback after each round of firing.*

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Bull's-eye!

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## References

*The Basics of Rifle Shooting*, National Rifle Association, 1991.

